● Article ●

Japanese Language Education in the Nikkei Community in Peru

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Abstract

In this paper I examine the characteristics of language education of the Japanese migrants in Peru. Through the hundred and seventeen years of settlement[1], five generations with Japanese ancestry have graduated from Peruvian schools. The first generation kept in mind the idea of returning home after a few years of work. Given the importance of education for the ethnic minority and due to the lack of schools for their descendants, they opened their own schools stressing Japanese culture and language. Historical and political issues forced them to close these educational institutions, but did not diminish parents' desire to maintain the heritage language. The postwar years showed the development of community institutions, and at the same time the rapid integration of young generations into Peruvian society.

A gradual shift to Spanish language and less use of Japanese language at home has been the main trend of Nikkei families. Research on the main community association, a private school, in addition to interviews with language teachers and questionnaires to students disclose that at the present time, it is difficult to consider Japanese as a heritage language in young generations. In spite of being the language of their ancestors, it is actually learned as a foreign language. After World War II the main focus of the second generation was to integrate into Peruvian society, and most of the third generation Nikkeis studied at local schools with less or none formal instruction on Japanese language. Besides the influence of external factors, I argue that community support is important in providing ethnic ties and tools to consolidate and develop the group, but parents and families are the key actors especially in early education for heritage language maintenance.

Key words: Nikkei, Japanese Peruvians, Migrants' education, Heritage language, Foreign language.

Introduction

The 117th anniversary of the Japanese migration in Peru represents not only a sequence of historical events, but also the settlement and development of an ethnic minority who experienced a series of changes. The 100,000 (KNK 2016) *Nikkeijin*[2] people, including six generations are already well integrated into Peruvian society. At the present day, probably only the physical characteristics might differentiate them from other nationals.

In his study of assimilation, Price (2010) analyzes the stages on the Chain Migration[3] focusing on the European migrants in Australia. Similar characteristics of these stages are found in the immigration of Japanese in Peru. Although Japanese migration settled down in a different environment, the characteristics of Price's first stages can be applied to the second and third generations of Japanese migrants. His analysis concentrates on early generations of free peasant migrants. After "establishing themselves in small independent businesses" and settling down with their families, the second generation "reach maturity, encourage parents to adopt a higher standard of living and often take jobs higher up the occupational ladder" (Price 2010, 211). The main objective of the Japanese was not only to achieve economic stability, but also to get better social, cultural and educational conditions for their descendants. The continuous and strong support of the community played an important role in this hard task.

Japanese communities in Latin America are identified by their strength, close ties, hard work and loyalty to their families (Masterson and Funada-Classen 2004, Takenaka 2003, 2004). The Peruvian Nikkei community is not an exception, and since the beginning of the migration they were characterized by their strong family and community affiliation. They became even stronger during war times in order to protect and support each other. Most of the Japanese traditions and values are still vivid in most Nikkei families, especially if the family lives with grandparents or great grandparents. However, today a high proficiency of Japanese language is not a common characteristic in young generations.

This paper aims to analyze the Japanese language education of the Japanese migrants' descendants and to find out what the main factors have been that influenced the language shift to Spanish without maintaining the

Japanese language and why Japanese has been hardly spoken among young generations. After more than a century, is it still possible to consider Japanese as the heritage language in the current Nikkei community? Or did the community lose its heritage language from the third generation?

Japanese as a Foreign Language – Heritage Language

In the analysis of the Japanese language in Peru, I start with an overview of Japanese as a foreign language[4]. According to the statistics (2015) of the Japan Foundation 468,450 examinees took the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT日本語能力試験) overseas. A previous survey (Japan Foundation 2013) established that there were approximately 3.99 million learners of Japanese language as a foreign language in the world, an increase of 9.2% compared to 2009. There has been a continuous increase from 1979 to 2012. Some of the main reasons why students take Japanese lessons include the interest and communication in Japanese language, interest in manga, anime, J-Pop, history and literature, future employment, the desire to study in Japan, and the interest in sightseeing and understanding other cultures. These figures show different motivations and interests in learning Japanese language all over the world. According to the statistics provided by the Department of Japanese Language (APJ 2016b), there were 2,937 people studying Japanese at Nikkei language institutions and Nikkei schools in Lima, Ica, Trujillo, Chiclayo, Cusco, Huancayo and Huaral. From the total, twenty percent accounts for Nikkei students, so considering the total population of Nikkei in the country, less than 0.6% are currently studying Japanese.

Japanese is far from been considered an endangered language at risk of extinction. Despite the shrinking population in Japan, it is spoken by more than 126 million native speakers and has almost 4 million students learning it worldwide. Within the UNESCO's categories of degree of endangerment Japanese is considered to be safe, it is a "language spoken by all generations; intergenerational transmission is uninterrupted", and it is not suffering from any cause of language endangerment (Austin and Sallabank 2011, 3)[5]. However, if we categorized the current situation in the Nikkei community in Peru, Japanese is in the severely endangered category: "[the] language is spoken by grandparents and older generations; while the parent generation

may understand it, they do not speak it to children or among themselves" (Austin and Sallabank 2011, 3).

The Japanese language analysis focuses on the current use of the language among the migrants and next generations in Peru; that is, on Japanese as a "heritage language". A heritage language is also referred to as an "international, community, immigrant, ethnic, indigenous, minority, ancestral, third, and non-official language" (Montrul 2016, 13). And in this study we will use the term "heritage language" to refer to the language spoken by migrants and their descendants, whose use is usually limited to the home and community environment. Valdés (cited in Gass and Selinker 2008) highlights the "historical and personal connection to the language" rather than high language skills of the speaker, and in the context of an English language speaking environment she defines a heritage language learner as "someone who is raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken, who speaks or at least understands the language, and who is to some degree bilingual in that language and in English." Heritage language speakers show different degrees of language proficiency among generations, and most of them have better listening and speaking skills than writing and reading skills, though we can find variations depending on the emphasis given to formal learning and input at home. And so, as we shall see, despite its popularity as a foreign language internationally, Japanese has not followed the same trend in increased popularity as a minority or heritage language among Nikkeis[6] in Peru.

In this study the distinction of a minority language is only given in terms of the number of speakers, in contrast to the majority language. Although there is no intention to emphasize discriminatory issues, the historical analysis of migrants shows that the heritage language speakers experienced discrimination policies especially during the first years of their settlement. Montrul (2016, 13-4) indicates "the term *heritage language* is hardly neutral because it has sociopolitical connotations (...) For different reasons, minority languages are often marginalized within nations or territories. The ethnolinguistic group in question may be a demographic minority, or may have a large population but be considered a minority in virtue of its lower social, cultural, and political status related to factors surrounding immigration or colonization."

The need or wish to integrate into the dominant society, in addition to external regulations (especially during conflict times), influence heritage language speakers to shift to the dominant or majority language. Montrul (2013a, 172) indicates that the second-generation speakers play a key role in this process "because the children are schooled in the majority language, they are drawn to fitting in with the new society [...]. As the majority language begins to be used more than the home language, especially at school and with peers, the input from and use of the heritage language decreases." Second generation speakers start using the heritage language less and less at home and gradually reply in the dominant language. The lack and availability of heritage language schools make it harder to avoid the language shift. Ostler (2011, 314) mentions "[A] language is *maintained*[7] if speakers effectively pass it on to the next generation. This transmission may fail because speakers do not use it sufficiently in the learners' presence; or because the learners themselves, for some reason, do not choose to make use of it."

The major concern in the heritage language is when the language shift[8] starts and it leads to the language loss. Krashen (1998, 41) points out that heritage languages are difficult to maintain, and the shift to the dominant language happens fast and "is generally complete in a few generations." The second-generation heritage speakers are usually the bridge between their parents and the dominant language speakers, as they become fluent in the majority language. Becoming fluent in this language produces weakening effects in their heritage language. Third-generation heritage language speakers "may have partial knowledge of the heritage language, while most do not. By the fourth and subsequent generations, the minority, heritage language is no longer used in the family."

Japanese Schools in Peru – Historical Overview

In order to examine to current trends of Japanese language in young generations, I analyze the development of Japanese schools in Peruvian society. In spite of the importance of Japanese language among the Nikkei, historical events had a significant impact on the maintenance and gradual loss of the heritage language.

> "The main concern of the Japanese immigrants was the education of their children. The spirit of persistent improvement, values of justice and freedom were always with them"[9] (APJ, 1999: 255).

During the first years of immigration in Peru, the lack of schools for the migrants' children did not diminish the parents' efforts to provide suitable academic tools for their children. Due to the lack of Japanese schools, parents organized the schools by themselves. They gathered the children in a house of one of them, and served as teachers for their children. As much as possible, parents followed the Japanese educational program as their stay in Peru was only temporary, and they planned to return to Japan after a few years (APJ 1999). Maintaining Japanese language and culture were the priorities for the Japanese parents. According to Fukumoto (1997, 210) "the first Japanese school was founded in 1908 in the Hacienda Santa Bárbara in Cañete, with nine children and one teacher. Forty-nine other schools followed the first one in other haciendas and cities. Most of the schools were founded during the 1920s and 30s and they were managed and sponsored by the Japanese migrants."

In 1920 the Japanese Central Society (*Sociedad Central Japonesa,* SCJ) founded the Lima Nikko School, one of the most well-known and prestigious Japanese school in Peru that served as a model for other Japanese schools in Peru. Miyasato (2014) describes the arduous process of building up the school. The SCJ led the fundraising process among its members and the recruitment of teachers through the Japanese Consulate. The requirements for the teachers' job included having a tertiary education with at least seven years of experience, being healthy and married persons, being older than thirty years old, and having a basic knowledge of Spanish and some experience living abroad. The SCJ offered a contract of five years, second-class tickets and two-month salary in advance. The salary for men teachers was 100 *soles* and 60 *soles* for women teachers. The first director and teacher was Mr. Goro Yokose, who traveled to Peru with his wife and together, they were the first teachers of the school. Miyasato (2014) also narrates the tough beginning of Lima Nikko, the initial location had to be changed due to the opposition of the owner to use it as an educational facility. Due to the lack of funds, the teachers had to clean and help to prepare the facilities suitable for a school. Additionally, the

first teachers were Japanese and they had problems with some students who did not understand Japanese and the teachers did not speak Spanish.

The Lima Nikko School was recognized by the Ministry of Education of Japan in 1932 (APJ 1999, Miyasato 2014). It achieved an enrollment of 1,800 students with 50 teachers (Japanese and Peruvians). In addition to the Japanese educational programs, Lima Nikko also followed the official programs in Peru. Students studied with official texts from Japan, including courses of history and geography, language, natural science, mathematics and ethics. The education emphasized the "Japanese spirit" and respect for the Japanese Emperor; "at the end of the academic year the students sang the Japanese and Peruvian national hymns" (Fukumoto 1997, 210). The Lima Nikko School was expropriated in 1942 and it changed its original location two times[10]. The third location still functions as the national school for women called *Teresa Gonzales de Fanning* in the district of *Jesús María* (in Lima).

Before WWII, Japanese schools concentrated on the Japanese education thinking of the return of the families to Japan and their future adaptation to the Japanese system. In this way, the *nisei* (second generation Japanese Peruvian) were educated as Japanese in Peruvian society. On the other hand, as there were no secondary schools, parents who could afford to send their children to Japan (Fukumoto 1997). The transition from rural to urban areas promoted the creation of other Japanese schools due to the increase of the number of children and the need to continue further education. There were twenty-two elementary schools at the beginning of World War II, however only three of them had the recognition of the Japanese Ministry of Education. The success in urban areas also increased the unpopularity among the Peruvians who saw the Japanese as potential competitors in their own businesses.

Anti-Japanese measures before WW II affected the Japanese institutions and families. In 1932 the "80% Law" the law was enacted which established that all foreign commercial establishments must include Peruvian nationals as 80% of their employees. It was a direct measure against the Japanese who used to employ mostly their relatives and friends (Shintani 2005). This Law also applied to schools like Lima Nikko, so this school had to reserve 80% of its teaching positions for Peruvian teachers (Miyasato 2014). After the Pearl Harbor attack, the Peruvian government disposed a series of measures regarding all citizens of the Axis countries. The Japanese newspapers and

associations were closed; the Peruvian government prohibited the gathering in one place of more than three Japanese nationals, and ordered the confiscation of driving licenses and telephones. In 1942, during the government of the Peruvian President Prado, Lima Nikko was expropriated, and Japanese teachers were repatriated. The school reopened teaching only in Spanish and changed its name to *Escuela Jesús María.* However, parents did not give up in their wish to continue providing schooling for their children during harsh times. "Semi-clandestine schools called *Gakuen* were formed to continue studying Japanese language" (APJ 1999, 256). There were other schools that were no expropriated due to the change to Spanish names and registration by Peruvian teachers such as *Escuela Santa Beatriz* (former *Jishuryo*), *Colegio José Gálvez* (former *Escuela Japonesa del Callao*) and *Escuela Zamudi*o (former *Hoshi Gakuen*) (Miyasato 2014, APJ 1999).

Vallejo Sameshima (2013) describes the characteristics of education during the 1950s through the testimonies of his uncle and aunt who studied at Santa Beatriz School. Before WWII Japanese schools were rigorous about language education, and children who joined national or public schools in the postwar times had to study Spanish very hard to communicate with their classmates. One of the main objectives for the Nikkei second generation, however was to integrate into Peruvian society, and so the school life at that time shared Peruvian and Japanese customs. Vallejo Sameshima recalls that during his school days he used to eat mainly "comida criolla" (creole food), though once in a while students ate Japanese dishes. On the other hand, they used to clean the schoolyard, restrooms and their classrooms, as Japanese students in Japan do.

During primary school Vallejo Sameshima's uncle and aunt studied at Santa Beatriz School, but moved to national schools for secondary education because Santa Beatriz provided only elementary schooling. His mother used to attend another institution close to her house, because she was younger than her siblings and nobody could take her to school. She studied secondary at the national school *Teresa Gonzales de Fanning*. Vallejo Sameshima still asks himself why his grandparents chose Peruvian schools instead of Japanese or Nikkei schools to continue their secondary education. Unfortunately, his grandfather passed away without answering his question. Through the testimonies of his mother, uncle and aunt, he reveals the good school days

of his relatives. They expressed their pride in attending national secondary schools because it was hard and difficult to pass the entrance examinations. Although their closest friends were Nikkei too, they felt like Peruvians without discriminations. Vallejo Sameshima shares his mother's feelings, "at home I felt Japanese because of *ojiichan* (*grandfather*), but outside I felt Peruvian." This shows his feelings and gradual integration into Peruvian society.

Japanese Language Education in the Nikkei community

After examining the development of Japanese schools, I analyze the current Japanese language instruction. The following cases are the results of the fieldwork conducted in Lima in March 2016.

a) Japanese Language Instruction

One of the most experienced Japanese teachers at the Peruvian Japanese Association (APJ) accepted to be interviewed and provided important insights about the beginning of Japanese language instruction in Peru. She kindly accepted to share her experiences through her successful and recognized teaching career. Professor Akamine is currently Director of National and International Relations at APJ and started teaching Japanese thirty-seven years ago. Professor Akamine points out the year 1980 as the starting point of a systematic and formal language instruction in Peru thanks to the methodology of Professor Tatsuta who was sent to Peru by the Japan Foundation to train Japanese language teachers. Professor Tatsuta started the training of teachers of Japanese as a foreign language in the U.S.A, Australia, and Malaysia. He is considered the pioneer of Japanese as a foreign language, and he wrote a book especially for Peru. Professor Akamine recalls what Professor Tatsuta used to tell the language teachers "We do not teach the book, we teach with the book."

Before the innovations of Professor Tatsuta, the materials mainly used in Peru were the same textbooks used in Japan translated into Spanish. Previous methodologies were not working as expected in Peru, as they had in other countries where the Japanese migration occurred later. Several external and historical issues and the characteristics of young generations in the community required changes in the orientation of Japanese instruction. During her

teaching career Professor Akamine experienced variations in the materials available for students and teachers. In the 1980s the teacher used to use cards, tapes and videos (Betamax); today we can use the Internet, CDs, DVDs, cable television (NHK) and other multimedia devices. Technology has shortened distances offering extensive and first-hand information. Students by themselves can watch and listen to live Japanese news and have the possibility to improve their pronunciation.

When Professor Akamine started teaching in Peru, she recalls, "Most of the students were Nikkei, almost ninety percent of the total." In the last three decades the interest in Japanese language among young Nikkei has decreased. During the 1990s, the number of non-Nikkei students increased due to the Japanese economic development, products that entered Latin American markets, and the possibility to study in Japan. Each teacher used to teach an average of thirty or more students. Although it was not the best learning conditions for students to speak and practice, they were good students. On the other hand, the interest in manga, anime, and cosplay also attracted non-Nikkei to study Japanese language. At the moment of the interview Professor Akamine says "Japanese classes are composed by ten to fifteen students per class and sometimes there is only one Nikkei student." Most of Nikkei students do not take the chance to apply for scholarships sponsored by several organizations to study in Japan.

Parents play an important role in their children's education, and focusing on the heritage language. Professor Akamine points out the need of speaking. She asserts, "If you do not speak, you forget. If you do not keep on practicing you cannot improve. Bilingualism is very valuable." She shared her personal experience regarding the language education of her sons; both of them are fluent in Japanese, it is the language at her home. "Parents' and family roles are crucial, if they do not speak the heritage language to their sons, the language will be lost." When the second and third generation moves to another location other resources can be used (frequent telephone communications, on line courses, visits to the relatives in Japan, etc.). In the case of her grandchildren, she particularly stresses the continuous communication in Japanese with them. Especially for the one who lives in another Latin American country because Spanish and English are the languages taught at school, there are fewer opportunities to practice Japanese due to the father's job, distance

from grandparents, and lack of Japanese language schools at their current location. For her second grandchild, the trip to Japan and meeting his great grandmother was inspiring to realize the importance of his heritage language, to continue studying Japanese and motivate him to visit Japan again.

The long, active and productive teaching career of Professor Akamine inspires new language teachers, as well as the more than a thousand students who have attended her lessons. Although she is not currently teaching, she provides counseling and advises the new teachers. She considers that it is important to share her teaching experience with new generations.

b) The Peruvian Japanese Association (*Asociación Peruano-Japonesa* - APJ)

The APJ is the institution that gathers and represents the Peruvian Japanese community living in Peru. Its main objectives are to ensure the welfare of its members and promote the integration to Peruvian society, disseminate the values and traditions of Japanese culture, and promote cultural, scientific and technical exchange between Peru and Japan. The APJ was founded in 1917 under the name of the Japanese Central Society (APJ 2016).

At the present time, the APJ is divided in the following divisions: Welfare, Cultural Promotion, Education, Institutional support and Management. This paper examines only the area of Japanese language, which is part of the *Unidad de Cursos* (Courses Unit) in the department of education. The Japanese language department coordinates the promotion, teaching and practice of Japanese language and intends to promote cultural exchange between Peru and Japan. Thanks to the support of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Japan Foundation and experts in the field, the APJ organizes seminars and training courses for Japanese language teachers. Additionally, the APJ organizes national speech contests, promotes the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (N1 to N5), and holds conversational workshops for people who learned Japanese or lived in Japan and want to continue practicing the language. There are three workshops based on the age of the participants: *Nihongo Junior Donguri Club* for children and teenagers (six to fifteen years old), *Shaberankai* (sixteen to thirty) and *Nihongo no ohanashi kai* (thirty and above) for ex-trainees or ex-interns, and Japanese who want to share their experiences in Japan. These workshops are free of charge and they

take place on the second Saturday of each month, and also the forth Saturday for *Nihongo no ohanashi kai*. The teachers in charge of these workshops are all volunteers.

The *Unidad de Cursos* offers Japanese language courses that range from basic to advanced levels（intensive, three times a week, Saturdays, and Sundays）and counts on forty teachers（Japanese and Peruvians nationals）. Currently, these courses use the textbook（みんなの日本語–*Minna no Nihongo*), and additional materials and textbooks are used by the teachers according to the level. Teachers are constantly trained in Peru and Japan. The institution also promotes the training and professional development of teachers from other institutions in Lima and other provinces. According to the statistics（November 2015）, there were 493 students who registered for the Japanese language courses, and this number usually increases during summer vacations（January and February）. Some of the students started their interest in the language due to one aspect of Japanese culture such as manga and anime, while others want to obtain a scholarship to study in Japan. The *Unidad de Cursos* also offers courses related to Japanese art and culture（for example: *origami, manga, ikebana, and kumihimo*）.

Japanese class

I had the opportunity to observe one class for advanced-level students. Only three students attended this class, as usually, there are more students in the basic and few students in advanced levels. One of the students in the class won the speech contest and another student works as a translator. During the class the teacher used only Japanese and the students asked and replied also in Japanese. *学ぼう！日本語 Vol.5, 中上級* was the textbook used in class, and the students were reading a text about volunteerism in Japan. The textbook is for an advanced level for students intending to take the Japanese Language Proficiency Test level N1（the highest of five levels）.

By March 2016, the number of Nikkei students studying Japanese at APJ is low compared to non-Nikkei. On the other hand, after the March 2011 earthquake in Japan, some Nikkei families who were living in Japan decided to return to Peru, and some of the children continue studying Japanese. However, the situation for most teenagers is different, and those who enter

secondary school or tertiary education quit the Japanese language courses due to the school program or because they prefer to concentrate on English due to their studies or jobs. From the total number of students registered in Japanese courses, about twenty percent of the total has a Japanese ancestry. In response to this low percentage of Nikkei in the language courses, the language department plans to reinforce the interest of the youth and to promote the Japanese language stressing the importance of language in the Nikkei identity. The workshops mentioned above (*Nihongo Junior Donguri Club, Shaberankai, Nihongo no ohanashi kai*), serve as a tool to maintain and facilitate the preservation of the Japanese language and the people who returned from Japan shared their personal experiences. There is an average of fifteen and twenty participants in each workshop.

The coordinator of language classes, Mr. Takayama, expressed the importance of parents continuing to speak Japanese at home; especially when there is intermarriage with a non-Nikkei spouse. The situation is also more complicated in fourth, fifth and sixth generations. There is a lack of information in young generations as to why Japanese is important for them. The institution wants young people who lived in Japan to share their experiences and shed light on the importance of the language. Young generations usually do not approach and do not know about the activities available at the APJ (Japanese cinema, theater, etc.) besides cooking, and crafts courses. Nikkei children studying in non-Nikkei schools have less interest in the activities and the language. Professor Takayama said: "Maintaining Japanese language among the Nikkei community is a very difficult task, there is a need to stress the relevance of Japanese language among the community and its identity."

c) La Unión School

La Unión School is a private school and one of the most prestigious and well-known Nikkei schools in Peru. Due to the need for a school for the Nikkei children to maintain the Japanese traditions and language, in 1970 the *Asociación Estadio La Unión* (AELU, La Unión Stadium Association) donated part of its sports facilities to build up the school. One year after submitting the application to the Ministry of Education the school opened its doors (APJ 1999). Although this school was originally created to educate Nikkei children,

it was and is not limited to students from the community. Many graduates became artists, academics, and politicians. For example the former President Ollanta Humala（2011-2016）graduated from this school.

National and public schools do not offer the same quality of education as private schools. The national budget in education needs to be increased to improve teacher training, the regularity of classes（to complete the annual curriculum according to the program）and to focus on the quality of education（so as to be competitive to enter Peruvian and international universities）. If parents can afford it, they prefer to register their children in a private school. In addition to maintaining Japanese traditions and values, La Unión School provides both a safe environment and suitable academic and sports facilities, in addition to equipment that can facilitate a high quality education. Within the certification of the International Baccalaureate（IB）, the school offers the Diploma Program for secondary students emphasizing the intellectual, physical, emotional and ethical education preparing the students for a globalized world（Colegio La Unión 2016, International Baccalaureate 2016）.

By the first week of March 2016, the total number of students enrolled in this school accounts for 1,230 students and each year this number increases. According to the statistics by 2015, forty-four percent of the students were Nikkei. Students were grouped in this category based on their last names（at least one of the two last names was Japanese）. In the secondary school, the number of Nikkei students accounts for sixty percent, while in the primary school this number decreases to thirty percent of the total. Regarding Japanese language teachers, there are twelve teachers（among this number, one teacher is a Japanese national, one Nikkei, two who are naturalized Japanese, and the rest of the teachers have no Japanese ancestry）.

The number of academic hours of Japanese language classes varies according to the grades. For example, from first to fourth grades in primary school, students study five hours per week. In fifth and sixth grades, the academic load decreases to four hours. In secondary school, the total number of hours is reduced to three hours from seventh to ninth grade; while in tenth and eleventh grades students have only two hours of Japanese language due to the increase in English language classes. Japanese language teachers prepare all the materials used in the primary school, but in the secondary school students use the textbook *Marugoto*, a Japanese language textbook published by the

Japanese Foundation for learners of Japanese language as a foreign language. Twenty to thirty is the average number of students taking the JLPT, and the majority are students who returned from Japan. Teachers provide a special preparation for the ones who want to take this test.

Japanese class

The following are the results of my observation[11] of the fifth grade Japanese class. The students study Japanese twice a week (Mondays and Tuesdays, two hours each day). The class was divided in two groups during the Japanese lessons; fifteen students, ten boys and five girls composed it. In class, students were divided into four groups, three for boys and one group of girls. The class started with greetings in Japanese, then the teacher took the attendance and verified if the students brought the materials to be used in class. After explaining the rules, the class started with a warm-up exercise called *shiritori*[12]. In this warm-up the students became very excited and were motivated to answer correctly.

The teacher explained the main objective of the day, and he continued with the new vocabulary. First, the students listened to the phrases after the teacher's directions (聞きましょう！). The teacher introduced the main topic of the class showing some pictures through a power point presentation. For the new vocabulary, the teacher explained who the persons were in the pictures, and then he made the students practice the structure he was explaining. The class continued with the introduction of new verbs. Students practiced orally with new examples displayed on the screen and they included their own examples (the food they usually eat, and what they usually do and study). The students actively participated when the teacher asked several questions and even if they made mistakes they tried again until they found the correct answer. Then, students practiced the written exercises and the teacher walked around the class to correct the students.

Additional written exercises were distributed and the teacher together with the students reviewed again the new vocabulary and the instructions in the handouts. Before the end of the class, the teacher summed up the main structures learned during the class, and asked all the students to answer the exercises. Most of the time the teacher used Japanese, however the

explanations were given in Spanish and some translations were required in the middle of the class（there were some students who had a higher level of Japanese）. Finally, each student went to the teacher's table and he verified what they learned. If they made mistakes, the teacher made them think again until they answered correctly. At the end of the class, the teacher invited me to ask the students some questions. They expressed what they liked from Japan（food, technology, etc.）, and how the weather is compared to Peru. One student said that he sang Japanese songs at home with his mother, and another student expressed his wish to visit Japan in the future.

Nihon gaeri[13] class

A decade ago, it was not usual to have children returning from Japan to Peru with Spanish language problems. On the contrary, parents had been worried about theirs and their children's Japanese language skills to communicate efficiently in Japan. After the peak of the *dekasegi* movement[14], due to the problems of adaptation, some parents decided to return or send back their children to study in Peru while they continued working in Japan. Based on this situation, a new problem arose. Children who were born in Japan with problems in speaking Spanish and getting used to the Peruvian educational system. The *Nihon gaeri* class stresses maintaining the Japanese language skills they got in Japan and giving support to adaptation problems. Some of these students do not know exactly if their parents will stay in Peru or Japan, or what they will do in the future. After graduation, about ten to twenty percent of the students return to Japan to work, but the majority stays in Peru and continues their tertiary education.

This class was created five years before the moment of the interview, and since that time the number of students has increased, and it might continue increasing in the future years. Currently, there are forty-four students who participate in the *Nihon gaeri class*. The school also provides additional support for students who have Spanish language problems. Students who do not have Spanish proficiency have one year to catch up with the level, meanwhile they are considered as free students. In primary school, students usually get more support from their parents, and they can succeed in reaching the Spanish level faster than older students. In secondary it is more difficult to achieve the same

level of Spanish as their classmates due to the number and contents of the curriculum.

Some of the students studied using the distance learning education - PEAD[15] system in Japan before returning to Peru. For these students it is easier to enter Peruvian schools as they continue learning the language and the school program. However, not all parents have a clear idea of their future mainly based on economic constraints. PEAD is one of the tools to maintain Spanish language skills and to follow the Peruvian school program in the case of students who have the support of their parents and tutors in Japan.

Thanks to the support of the teachers in charge of the *Nihon gaeri class*, some students (secondary level) responded to a questionnaire about Japanese language and Japan. Twenty-two responses were obtained from students between eleven to eighteen years old mainly fifth and sixth generation Nikkei. The results show that half of the students use only Spanish, and the other half Spanish and Japanese at home. Japanese is mostly spoken with one of their parents (usually mothers who spend more time with their children) and other relatives (siblings, cousins or grandparents). One student answered that she speaks Japanese with her grandmother. Regarding the time the students spent in Japan, it ranges from two weeks to twelve years. The longer they stayed in Japan the more they missed the country. Some of the students had spent more than two thirds of their lives in Japan. To the question of whether they wanted to return to Japan, the answer was also related to their parents' separation, and nine students mentioned that they missed "the family" and two of them specified the father. Sixteen students wanted to return to Japan, while only two answered "no" because of the length of the flight, and "Peru is a sociable country". On the other hand, students with short stays (two weeks to three months) focused more on the cleanliness, neatness, order, and weather in Japan. The majority has an intermediate – advanced level of Japanese language, however only half of them have taken the JLPT. Three of the students were born in Japan, and they expressed their desire to return to Japan. One of them said "(I want to go to Japan but) not to live, I want to understand better Japanese culture and spread it in my country (Peru)" (parenthesis in the original). Even if the Japanese language proficiency is higher than the Nikkei living in Peru, the expressions of some *students* show that most of the children identify themselves with Peruvian culture, and a weak or temporary historical

or personal connection with Japan an important factor that characterized the heritage language as pointed out by Valdés（cited in Gass and Selinker 2008）.

Conclusions

Although most of the first and second generations emphasize preserving Japanese traditions and customs, and maintaining Japanese language at home, in late generations the situation is different. Gradually, they have been integrated into Peruvian society, studying at national, public and private schools where Japanese is not the common foreign language learned. Students who have studied in non-Nikkei schools have learned other languages such as French, German or Italian and they emphasize English especially in their tertiary education.

Through the case studies we have seen that Japanese language is generally learned as a foreign language, no longer learned as a heritage language except for the cases of the returnees in special classes, which is still a very low number and show variations in language skills. Japanese has been hardly spoken at home from the third generation onwards, except for the use of simple greetings or expressions, most parents communicate in Spanish with their children. Actually, for young generations without the experience of living and studying in Japan or the ones who have formally studied at language schools, there is no difference when they start studying Japanese in primary school, all children start from the basic level as a foreign language.

The findings disclosed from the interviews and questionnaires demonstrate that parents and families are the key for language maintenance especially in childhood. Montrul（2016）points out the language shift usually happens in the second generation in the home. Parents cannot do this task alone, and Li（2006）and Klee（2011）highlight the role of institutions such as community organizations and associations, schools, and language schools in supporting the language preservation. The dominant language and general attitude toward the heritage language have a strong effect on heritage language speakers as we have seen through the historical overview and Vallejo's testimony. National policies also influence the children's attitudes to accept or reject their heritage language due to the approval or not from the majority, as we have examined through the effects of WWII.

Through her personal experience Professor Akamine has realized the importance of emphasizing language maintenance in her children and grandchildren. On the other hand, her testimony showed the relevant role of the language teachers. Adequate materials, regular trainings, and the need to understand students' motivations and backgrounds are key elements in the learning process. In the last five years, Nikkei schools have been receiving new students returning from Japan. Being more fluent in Japanese than in Spanish produce a new and an unexpected panorama for most schoolteachers in Peru. The valuable experiences of the participants (as parents and teachers) in the interviews emphasize the role and responsibility of the family and teachers through the learning process in Peru and Japan.

Although it is desirable, ethnic affiliation does not always guarantee the maintenance of the language. The literature review and case studies have shown that young generations hardly speak the heritage language and in some cases the language loss happens before the fourth generation. At the present, Japanese language is learned as a foreign language. Nikkei returnees (mostly fifth and sixth generations) are experiencing, to some extent the language problems that their ancestors lived when they arrived to Peru. At the moment, they have more technological resources than before to maintain their language skills, in addition to a more positive attitude toward the minority language. It is still early to analyze and state final conclusions as the economic situation influences their parents' decisions to stay or return to Japan, but the parents do and will play an important role in promoting bilingualism and probably reversing the heritage language loss. Further research in the topic is definitely required as six generations imply a series of changes, and adjustments. Heritage language maintenance is neither an easy nor a short process, and as Ostler (2011) highlights, language maintenance "is not a problem for a single generation, a single campaign to be fought, and either won or lost. Where languages coexist, it is a struggle that will continue indefinitely into the future." With the support of community institutions, schools, and relatives, parents and children need to take advantage of the resources available to avoid losing their cultural and linguistic capital and take the responsibility for their own heritage.

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[1] The first group of Japanese migrants arrived in 1899（Fukumoto 1999, APJ 1999, Morimoto 1991）.

[2] The Association of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad（*kaigai nikkeijin kyoukai,* 海外日系人協会 2014）defines the term Nikkei as Japanese people who have relocated overseas on a permanent basis, as well as their second, third and fourth generation descendants, irrespective of current nationality and degree of Japanese ethnicity. Hirabayashi et al.（2002, 19）extended the definition to the communities the *Nikkei* have created as "a person or persons of Japanese descent, and their descendants, who emigrated from Japan and who created unique communities and lifestyles within the societies in which they now live."

[3] Divided in five stages, first the pioneers failed to return home and decided to stay; second the pioneers looked for company and tried to convince friends to join them, eventually some of them married local women; third, migrants established small independent businesses and called their families or fiancées; in the fourth and fifth stages, second and third generations "reached maturity" through better jobs that let them obtain economic stability. Commercial success produced the reaction of increasing discrimination and prejudice from native Peruvians. The gradual growth and stability of the migrants allowed the development of migrants' institutions.

[4] Lightbrown（2014, 144）defines a foreign language as a "language that is not ordinarily spoken among people in a learner's local environment." Gass and Selinker（2008, 517）add the formal environment（classroom）where the language is learnt.

[5] When a language is affected by natural catastrophes, wars, repressions, cultural, political or economic dominance（Austin and Sallabank 2011）.

[6] For further discussion on heritage language see Shintani 2014.

[7] Italics in the original.

[8] For Ostler（2011, 320）"Language shift is in some sense the complement of language maintenance: it is what happens when a language shift is not maintained."

[9] Originally in Spanish, author's translation.

[10] The school was planned to open its doors near the building of the Peruvian Congress（Jirón Junín）, however the owner of the building refused to let it functioned as a school. Teachers and community members looked for another facility for the school. Due to the limitation of budget and time, it opened its doors in a small with not very

suitable conditions for an educational institution in *Sagástegui* street. Musical activities were performed at Lima Theater or Mazzi Theater, and the Sports Day at Zamudio street (Mr. Hoshi's land) (APJ 1999, 244-7).

[11] Thanks to the permission of the Director and the Japanese language teacher who let me observe the Japanese class.

[12] A word game in which the first player says a word and the next player should say a word starting with the last syllable of the previous player. It is a very common game in Japanese schools, especially among primary school students.

[13] *Nihon gaeri* (*日本帰り*) refers to the children who returned to Peru from Japan.

[14] Refers to the flow of Nikkei workers during the late 1980s to 2000 who travelled to work in Japan in unskilled jobs due to the need of laborers and the Revision of the Immigration Law in Japan.

[15] Programa de Educación a Distancia (PEAD) recognized by the Peruvian Ministry of Education. Students who study and complete this program can take the university examinations to study in Peru (Shintani, 2014).